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INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 3562  
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 0070  
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 0005  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 6087  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002820

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/21/2017

TAGS: PREL PGOV AF PK TU

SUBJECT: TURKEY: PRESIDENT GUL TO TRAVEL TO PAKISTAN; WILL MEET WITH OPPOSITION

REF: A. ANKARA 2304

1B. ANKARA 1793  
1C. ANKARA 2779

Classified By: Acting PolCounselor Kelly Degnan for reasons 1.4(b),(d)

11. (C) Turkish President Gul telephoned President Musharraf November 19 to request an opportunity to visit Pakistan, preferably in early December, according to MFA South Asia desk officer Ilhan Sener. Traditionally, Pakistan is one of the first foreign visits by a Turkish President, after northern Cyprus and Azerbaijan; Gul had wanted to visit in early November but is still waiting for a date. Sener shared with us Gul's MFA-prepared talking points: Turkey unequivocally supports Pakistan in its struggle against terrorism and in its democratization process, and is encouraged by Musharraf's intention to push forward with elections. Sener also expected Gul to delicately request Musharraf's consent to Gul engaging with the opposition, and to specifically request Musharraf's help facilitating a meeting between Gul and Benazir Bhutto. Turkish media had earlier reported that Bhutto affirmed to the Turkish Ambassador in Islamabad the importance of Turkish democracy to Pakistan, and stressed the urgency of Turkey exerting efforts to help solve Pakistan's political crisis.

12. (C) The GOT is uncomfortable with Musharraf's decision to declare emergency rule, particularly given the strong personal ties PM Erdogan and Gul have developed with Musharraf (ref A). The Turkish media, however, has been strongly critical of Musharraf's actions. Opposition to emergency rule in Pakistan vaguely echoes the GOT's own struggles to subordinate the Turkish military to civilian rule. Already backing away from the usual unqualified support for Musharraf, Erdogan, in November 5 remarks to the National Press Club in Washington, said he was disappointed with developments in Pakistan, remarking, "It is not possible to accept this state of affairs. Having a military in control is not something that people who believe in democracy can accept." Indeed, failure on the part of Musharraf to credibly restore Pakistani democracy threatens to weaken a long, nearly uninterrupted period of "brotherly" relations between two allies. In addition, the GOT is well aware of the impact Pakistani instability could have on Turkey's considerable interests in Afghanistan.

MOMENTUM FLAGGING ON ANKARA DECLARATION COMMITMENTS

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¶3. (C) Sener doubted whether Presidents Karzai and Musharraf would still come to Turkey in early 2008 for another summit, as earlier planned. The GOT believes another meeting of the deputy FM-level Joint Working Group should precede the next trilateral summit, to provide the leaders some tangible accomplishments to discuss. Since the April 2007 Ankara Summit, the Joint Working Group has only met once (ref B). While the GOT believes it has delivered on its principal commitments, namely to provide joint training to Afghan and Pakistani experts at Ankara's NATO Center for Excellence on Defense Against Terrorism and at the Turkish International Academy Against Drugs and Organized Crime, it recognizes that overall progress has been limited. GOT plans to harness the energies of the Turkish private sector toward economic development in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region continue. The Association of Turkish Chambers of Commerce (TOBB) has already consulted with its Afghan and Pakistani counterpart organizations, and is proposing to try to replicate in Pakistan and Afghanistan the planned Israel-Gaza and Israel-West Bank joint industrial zones TOBB has spearheaded (ref C). A delegation from TOBB's research unit (TEPAV) plans to visit Pakistan and Afghanistan soon, and TOBB President Hisarciklioglu will most likely accompany President Gul to Pakistan. TEPAV director Guven Sak told us TOBB wants to engage in the region, but the economic conditions there are still largely unknown to Turkish industry.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

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